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**AFGHANISTAN**

## CASE STUDY

# Communities Air and Fix Problems

**The “Fix It” Radio Program on Salam Watandar uses the power of the media to fix problems in rural communities in Afghanistan.**



Photo: Internews

*Khanwali is a reporter and producer for Radio Milli Paygham in Logar Province.*

**CHALLENGE** Local government in Afghanistan is challenged by limited resources, minimal infrastructure, and decades of conflict. Despite the best efforts of authorities, local communities find that many of their basic needs and requests are not effectively addressed. To support local communities to work with local government on finding solutions to local problems, an innovative radio program called “Fix It,” has been produced and broadcasted through Salam Watandar - a national programming service partnering with 47 provincial local radio stations across the provinces of Afghanistan.

**INITIATIVE** “Fix It” reporters travel to communities to identify issues of concern to local residents. They then help these local communities work with the appropriate authorities to “fix” the problem. Khanwali Ahmadzai works on the program for Radio Milli Paygham, a radio station in Logar province, south of Kabul. Ahmadzai’s energy and persistence have helped make him and “Fix It” a local hit.

In one program Ahmadzai received a tip from a listener that a large girl’s school in nearby Mohammad Agha District lacked sufficient drinking water. More than 1,000 pupils had to use a single water tap, and even that did not often work. Ahmadzai contacted the local authorities, but every official claimed that the local government had no money to fix the problem.

Ahmadzai then contacted a local businessman. “I met Mirwais Karamwal in his house and I explained the problem over tea,” says Ahmadzai. “He immediately took an interest.” Karamwal donated a brand new pump, several faucets and a generator, as well as agreed to pay the fuel bill for the pump for two years.

**RESULTS** “You are the first reporter who has made an effort to fix our problems,” - the delighted pupils told Ahmadzai. “Fix It” has also solved other problems such as poor road conditions in Jalalabad, the delivery of delayed school books in Paktika, and garbage collection in communities in Badakhshan and Kabul. “Fix It” has shown the power of the media to act as an intermediary between government and civil society to improve people’s lives.